GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
POWER
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:284
ANSWERED ON:21.12.2004
INSTALLATION OF FAST METERS BY POWER COMPANIES
Aaron Rashid Shri J.M.;Singh Shri Prabhunath

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the power companies in the country, particularly NDPL and BSES in Delhi, have been fleecing the power consumers for the last several years by installing as much as 30 percent fast electricity meters and highly inflated electricity bills for domestic consumption;

(b) if so, the facts thereof along with the remedial action taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether the Government has received a number of complaints from the consumers in this regard;

(d) if so, the action taken thereon;

(e) whether the Government proposes to include some stringent penalty clauses in the Electricity Bill, 2003 against the installation of fast meters by unscrupulous power companies;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.M. SAYEED)

(a) to (g) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (g) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. 284 TO BE ANSWERED IN THE LOK SABHA ON 21.12.2004 REGARDING INSTALLATION OF FAST METERS BY POWER COMPANIES.

(a) to (d) : While no information/reports have been received from other States, the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission has informed that they had set up a Committee in August, 2003 to look into the various complaints being received in the Commission regarding faulty meters. The Committee included officials from DERC, the DISCOMs, namely BSES Yamuna Power Ltd., BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd. and North Delhi Power Ltd. and also a prominent Non Government Organisation (NGO), namely Common Cause. The Committee undertook testing of meters which were randomly selected from the stores of the DISCOMs.

The Committee had observed that more than 91% of the meters recorded consumption levels within the prescribed limits given in the Indian Electricity Rules. About 2% of the meters were found to be slow and 0.5% were faster than the prescribed limit. About 5% of the meters, however, were found to be defective.

As per the information made available by Government of NCT of Delhi, some complaints have been received from consumers in this regard. The complaints received from consumers are sent to the Discoms for speedy redressal of the grievances. On the issue of metering and billing, Discoms & consumers are governed by `Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (Performance Standards, Metering & Billing) Regulations, 2002` formulated by the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Under the relevant provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003, the DERC has set-up the Forums for each of the distribution companies, including the NDMC. These Forums are specially created to look into issues relating to consumer complaints other than cases of electricity theft or unauthorised use of electricity. In addition to the setting up of the Forums, the Commission has also appointed the Ombudsman to look into the non-redressal of grievances.

(e) to (g) : Section 55 of the Electricity Act, 2003 provides that supply of electricity shall be through installation of a correct meter in accordance with regulations made by the Central Electricity Authority. Section 142 of the Act provides for punishment for non-compliance of directions by Electricity Regulatory Commissions. Section 146 of the Electricity Act, 2003 provides for punishment inter alia for non-compliance of regulations under the Act. Section 149 of the Act provides for penalty in case offence under the Act is committed by a company.

Section 42 of the Act provides that every distribution licensee shall establish a forum for redressal of grievances of the consumers. It further provides that any consumer, who is aggrieved by non-redressal of his grievances make a representation to Ombudsman to be appointed by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission and the Ombudsman shall settle the grievance within a time specified by

the State Commission.